

## Decadence

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Summary: Albus Potter and Scorpius Malfoy are wealthy, popular, and bored, until they are invited into the mysterious Decadence Society, whose famed reputation for vice and immorality leads them down a path of misconduct, passion, and excitement, especially for Scorpius and a certain red-haired Weasley girl. Rated M for language and scenes of a sexual nature. May contain violence.

## Decadence

### Chapter One: Morons and Mystery

The droning voice buzzed in Albus' ears like a fat fly, making his head spin and his eyes ache. He leant back in his chair, rubbing his hands over his eyes until stars popped in them, struggling to suppress the yawn in his throat. His watch ticked, too slowly. The air in the classroom was too warm, it seemed to be lacking in oxygen.

'Macmillan!'

The snap replaced the drone, and Albus opened his eyes, glancing across to the corner of the classroom where a small blond boy's round face was reddening. He felt a twinge of pity for the boy. Archie Macmillan only bolstered the stereotype of Hufflepuffs being complete dunces. The Ancient Runes professor, Glifford, stood over Macmillan as he stuttered.

'If you please, Macmillan, translate the runes on the blackboard. It should be easy, as I've spent the last fifteen minutes of this lesson explaining the immediate past tense of Inca glyphs. Tell the class, Macmillan, what these glyphs mean.'

'S-Sir â€¦ it means â€¦ that says bird?'

'Yes, well done, you have managed to translate the glyph for \_bird\_, which the rest of the class managed in our first lesson on the Incas

a year ago. Now please, the sentence! Although as you seem barely able to manage an intelligible one in English, I see no high hopes for this!'

Albus was not quite sure why he spoke. It seemed mainly out of boredom over the routine bullying of Archie Macmillan, who now seemed close to tears. But suddenly he found himself saying: 'Sir, if Macmillan is unable to translate that sentence, it's more a fault of yours than a fault of his. You are supposed to be teaching him, after all.'

Glifford turned on him. He looked like a man who had once been quite fleshy, but then had had all the fat sucked out of him, so now his skin hung loose and wrinkled, sagging under his small dark eyes. His thin, purplish lips twitched when he spoke. 'Mr Potter. I see you have ideas on my teaching methods. May I remind you that it is I who teaches in this classroom, not you? If you wish to stand up for Macmillan, you can translate the sentence. And if you get it wrong, it's a detention.'

Albus looked at the board, cocking his head slightly to one side as he scanned the glyphs. 'The birds were used to heal the warrior,' he said. 'Oh, and if I might point out, sir, on the glyph for heal the spiral is supposed to be clockwise, not anti-clockwise?'

Faint titters rippled across the classroom, and he looked across the aisle to share a smirk with Scorpius. Glifford looked like he wanted to strangle somebody with his loose, bony hands, but as he took a step towards Albus the bell rang out for the end of the lesson, and the class started to stand and pack their books.

'As you seem to be so behind the rest of the class, Macmillan, you can learn these extra glyphs!' snapped Glifford, throwing a thick roll of parchment onto his desk. 'Oh, and Mr Potter, as pleased as I am that you seem to have such a strong knowledge of runes, I will not tolerate such insubordination again!'

'Sure,' muttered Scorpius to Albus as they left the classroom. 'What a dick.'

Outside the classroom, however, Albus felt someone shove past him, and looked around to see his cousin Rose scowling at him. She had been sat on the front row of the Ancient Runes class, raptly watching Glifford's every move. He raised his eyebrows at her, already knowing what her problem was but wanting her to spell it out.

'You shouldn't have done that, Albus. He's a teacher for a reason, and Macmillan needs to learn!'

He and Scorpius rolled their eyes. 'Right, and verbally humiliating him like that is exactly how to accomplish it? Come on, Rose, Glifford was just being a bully.'

'Says the cauldron to the kettle.' She marched off, joining up with a group of her Ravenclaw friends walking further ahead. Albus shook his head at her as she walked away. He and Scorpius headed towards the courtyard outside the Entrance Hall, sitting down on their usual bench. They sat back against the wall, stretching out their legs and observing the other students that milled about.

It was a chilly day, the sky above the colour of a dusty cloth, and Albus reached into his robes pocket and pulled out a battered box of cigarettes, placing one between his lips and lighting it with the Zippo Scorpius had given him for his fifteenth birthday. He could light it with his wand, but that looked clumsy and uncool. Taking a deep drag, he tipped his head back and let the smoke seep out through his nostrils and teeth.

'They'll kill you, you know.'

The Zabini twins had arrived, Xander sitting down beside Scorpius and Thea leaning against the wall by Albus. She arched a sculpted eyebrow at him, smiling through a sheet of smooth dark hair.

Cigarettes weren't fatal for wizards like they were for Muggles. There were spells that could clear toxins and cancer from lungs, and potions to heal the damage. It was apparently excruciatingly painful, but the cure worked. Albus didn't care to think about it as he took another drag, holding out the cigarette to Scorpius.

'No thanks.'

He knew that Scorpius drank instead of smoking, but it was polite to offer anyway. Scorpius was verging on alcoholic, he smoked a packet a day, Xander could hardly get through a party without snorting powdered Billywig sting. Thea was secretive but probably had some sort of addiction, maybe masturbation. In Slytherin, everyone was addicted to something, except weed. Marijuana was what every Hufflepuff was addicted to. Ravenclaws were addicted to energy potions. Gryffindors were prissy little innocents who supposedly didn't need anything to support them.

'Scorpius, you do know that Bella is stood about ten metres away?' said Xander after a while, nudging his head towards the Fourth Year girl that kept giving Scorpius hopeful looks over her shoulder. Bella Harper was supposedly Scorpius' girlfriend, although that fact was hotly debated between the four of them, mainly because Scorpius usually seemed entirely uninterested in the girl.

Heaving a deep sigh, he stood up and walked across to her, at which point she beamed at him and started up a rapid conversation. She was quite pretty, Albus thought, in a slightly bland way. He wondered whether she was just using him to look cooler in front of her friends, just as he was only really dating her because it was easier to do that than let her pursue him. Their conversation lasted roughly six and a half minutes - Thea timed it, the three of them betting how long it would take before Scorpius could get away - and then they kissed and Scorpius strode away without a backward glance.

'Just break up with her,' groaned Albus as he sat back down on the bench. 'You so obviously don't give two Doxy shits about her.'

'Yeah but she's the sort to make a break up really annoying,' said Scorpius, shrugging.

Break finished with another dull tolling of the bell, and Albus dropped his cigarette, the four of them walking at a leisurely pace towards their Transfiguration lesson. Outside the classroom, Albus felt someone bump into him again, only it wasn't Rose this time. He turned, and looked with an expression of dislike and contempt at the

boy in front of him. Amory McLaggen was a stocky, square boy who seemed to think that upholding Gryffindor values meant hating Slytherins on principle, and taking every action he could to annoy them. Scorpius and Albus had taken almost as quick a dislike to him as they had taken a liking to each other.

'Hullo, Potty,' said McLaggen, glaring at him. Albus only raised his eyebrow at the weak insult.

'I wouldn't start calling anyone else "potty", McLaggen, you're only inviting embarrassment, with your condition and all,' he said. McLaggen's eyes narrowed.

'What do you -'

But Albus had cast a silent Lacrimanus Hex, and McLaggen was unable to even finish his sentence before clapping his hands over his behind and hurrying off in an ungainly fashion down the corridor, to gales of laughter as people realised what had happened.

McLaggen's gang of friends looked angry, however, and Albus kept a hold on his wand in his pocket, but before anything more could happen the classroom door opened, and Professor Foxworth ushered them inside. Looking mutinous but unable to do anything more, the Gryffindor gang trooped inside, and the Slytherins followed.

The lesson was dull and well below their standard - the class was learning how to transfigure without speaking, something that he and Scorpius had learned when they were bored over the summer.

Tipping his chair back, Scorpius lazily flicked the goblet on his desk into a cactus and back again. It gave him immense satisfaction that even though Rose could also do non-verbal transfiguration, it was taking her a lot more effort and concentration. She was sat at the front of the class with her gawky Gryffindor boyfriend, who looked very clammy and seemed to be muttering under his breath. His goblet stayed the same shape, but turned green and sprouted spikes.

That night there was a party in the Slytherin Common Room, and despite all the prestige and class of the house, it was a hot, sticky, and quite boring affair. Albus had dealt out much of the alcohol and cigarettes in the room, and now he sat with Scorpius on a sofa drinking Firewhisky and observing a group of dancing Fifth Year girls. He had a pocketful of Sickles and Galleons that weighed down on his thigh in a very satisfying way. Living in a house of very rich students, he had to find a way to finance the lifestyle beyond his meagre pocket money. Xander and Thea found them and they ended up in a bathroom, breathing in the bluish powder until they could close their eyes and feel like they were floating on cool air â€|

Albus wasn't sure at first what had woken him up, but the first sensation he felt was overwhelming nausea. Reaching out and clumsily pushing open his bedside drawer, he fumbled about until he found a vial of potion that served as the magical version of Valium. He always had a constant supply. It did taste like liquid metal that was sharp and bitter in his throat, but his head started to clear and he didn't feel like he was about to vomit.

One of the symptoms of snorting Billywig is an intense heaviness of

the limbs at the comedown. Albus stayed horizontal on his bed, which was when he noticed something sharp poking his cheek. It was a parchment envelope, with his name written in elegant, slanting handwriting on the front. He flipped it over, squinting at the seal. It was black, and the stamp seemed to show a heart and a bottle entwined by a hissing snake.

Fumbling at the wax, he broke it open and slid out a weighty ivory card, written on in the same slanting handwriting as the envelope. Blinking to clear his blurred vision, he squinted at the words.

\_Congratulations. You have been selected as a candidate for the Decadence Society. Go to the Seventh Floor at midnight exactly, and wait. \_

'You got the same letter?'

Scorpius was awake, propping himself up on a pile of pillows and holding an identical card. Albus forced himself to sit up, pushing hair out of his eyes as he re-read the card. He didn't recognise the handwriting, as beautiful as it was. He couldn't tell if it was a boy's or a girl's, either. Not that that would've told him much.

As he looked across the dormitory, he saw an envelope on Xander's pillow as well, peeking out from beneath his head as he slept, his handsome features smooth and peaceful, his sleek dark hair falling elegantly about his face.

In Slytherin House, you could choose however many people to share with, or whether to have a single room. The furniture and walls would fluctuate accordingly. Theirs was an irregular pentagon shape, with Albus' and Scorpius' beds along one wall, Xander's along another, and the fireplace and door on either side. The final wall was taken up by a huge window, which looked out across the surface of the lake. Although the Common Room was underwater, one went up a spiral staircase to reach the dormitories, which were cut into the rock above the lake.

The effects of the Billywig powder were wearing off, and he was able to sit up and get out of bed. Kneeling down on the floor, he pulled his trunk out from under the bed and unlocked it. Picking up his wand from the bedside table, he tapped an inside corner of the trunk, and the interior morphed. Old robes, books and odd quills were replaced by rows and rows of bottles and boxes. He'd bought the trunk before his Second Year, when he was just starting out his dealing, on a loan from Scorpius. Only he knew the spell - password, really - that opened the secret compartment. He bought the alcohol, cigarettes and soft drugs in Knockturn Alley in the holidays, selling them for five times the price in the closed walls of Hogwarts.

It was unbelievably easy. He had an accounts book, of all the people that bought from him, that to anyone else just looked like it had a few bits of school notes and some doodles. He read through the most recently written page, checking it against his stocks. It was all there. He'd earned more than thirty Galleons.

He looked up at an odd groan, and saw that Scorpius was making Xander wake by charming his lamp to hover and nudge his face. When Xander attempted to bat it away, he flicked his wand, and the blankets shot

off him.

'You â€¦ git.'

Scorpius sniggered as Xander sat up blearily, fumbling to find the blankets that were now heaped over the end of the bed. He pulled them back around him, but now he was awake and glared at Scorpius.  
'What?'

'We've been sent messages. Yours is by your pillow, there,' explained Albus, and he and Scorpius waited patiently as Xander slit his open and read, before looking up at them with a furrow between his fine eyebrows.

The dormitory door opened, and Thea walked in. She was wearing her dark cashmere dressing gown, her hair in a loose bun. She was holding another ivory card, and held it up as she sat down in the armchair and looked at them. 'Got these too, right?' They held up their own.  
'What do you think of it?'

'Well, it's the Decadence Society, isn't it? It's a given that we're going to go,' said Scorpius. Xander and Thea nodded, but Albus looked more confused. 'Sorry, I forgot, it's sort-of a tradition in Slytherin House, but one that hasn't been written down anywhere. It's against the Decadence rules to write about it except through invitations like these ones, but you can tell your children, to pass it down through the generations.'

'What \_is \_the Decadence Society?' asked Albus impatiently.

'It's a society â€¦ of decadence,' said Xander in a vague voice.

'Thanks, mate, I hadn't deduced that one.'

'It's a secret society,' said Thea. 'You only get in by invitation, like we've got, and they only take in a handful of people each year, and only from Slytherin. I think there was one Ravenclaw, in 1856. You have to pass a series of tests to get accepted into the society properly, but once in â€¦ apparently it's amazing. They have parties that make the ones in the Common Room look fit for First Years. And they pull incredible stunts, too. And also, every Slytherin who's gone on to be successful has been in the Decadence Society.'

Albus stared down at his own card, the elegantly lettered hand. He still didn't recognise it. 'So we're going to go, then?'

'Of course, but how?' said Scorpius. 'We have to get from here to the Seventh Floor in the middle of the night.'

'That should not be a problem,' said Albus, smiling now and pulling a piece of apparently blank parchment out of his bedside drawer.  
'You're forgetting the map, Scorpius.'

He had found the map in his father's desk drawer three years ago, when he'd heard through the door of his father's study him saying 'I solemnly swear that I'm up to no good' and then, a minute or two later, 'mischief managed'. Curious, he'd peeked through the crack in the door, and seen his father put something away in the second drawer of his desk. When his father had gone to work, he'd investigated and

found the Marauder's Map. He didn't know if his father had noticed its absence, but he hadn't commented. And it had been extremely useful ever since.

That night the four of them waited in the boys' dormitory, sat around the fireplace talking about nothing much in particular. Apparently there was a strictly formal dress code, so the boys were wearing suits beneath their cloaks, and Thea a black lace dress, her hair tied up elegantly with some kind of silver comb. Finally, at eleven thirty, they stood up together and filed out of the room.

Albus had the Marauders Map, and checked it every few steps as they walked up to the Seventh Floor, but no one came near. They found that in one of the corridors the flaming brackets had been extinguished and it was almost pitch black, the only light coming from the gently glowing moon, just visible through the window.

'I'm guessing it's this one?' whispered Thea, lighting her wand and leading the way down the corridor. The boys followed, and for a moment they stood in the darkness, very confused, until dark figures stepped out of the shadows. Briefly, Albus thought that there were at least a dozen, but then he blinked and realised it was only four. One for each of them. They were dressed in black, and wore masks over their faces, only their mouths uncovered.

'Close your eyes.' He wasn't sure which dark figure had spoken, but he glanced to his right and saw Scorpius had shut his eyes tight, so did the same. As he stood with his eyes shut, he wondered for a second whether this was all some practical joke, and they were about to be caught by Professor Longbottom, or Boyle, the caretaker. But then a pair of hands - a girl's, from the light touch - brushed over his neck and cheek, and drew something over his eyes. A blindfold. It was tied at the back of his head.

'Walk forwards.' The hands touched his back now, pressing him forward, and trying to walk steadily he moved forward, forcing himself to keep his hands by his sides. They seemed to pass through a doorway, as suddenly light peeked through the edges of the blindfold. 'Stop.'

The order was very abrupt, and Albus almost stumbled. The hands pushed him down, and he dropped onto a low, hard chair. As he shifted slightly, he brushed against shoulders that he guessed were Xander and Scorpius. They were sat in a square.

The blindfold was vanished. Albus blinked rapidly, trying to adjust to the sudden light. A nearby brazier seemed to burn his eyes, and he looked away. There were now eight people stood in front of them, all dressed in the same jet black outfits and wearing cloaks and ornate masks, so they were unrecognisable. Three were girls, and Albus squinted at them, trying to guess which had blindfolded him. He couldn't tell.

'Welcome,' said the same voice, cool and authoritative. It came from the girl to Albus' left, tallest of the three, with light blonde hair just visible under the hood of the cloak. 'You have been selected as a candidate for the Decadence Society. But before you can enter our order, you must prove yourselves with three tests. If you do not wish to participate, you will be allowed to leave now. Anyone?'

Nobody moved, and she nodded, a smile appearing about her lips. 'Very well. You will find out your first task imminently. Do not tell it to anyone, not even each other. That is all.'

And with that, they were blindfolded again, and escorted from the room. For a couple of floors, they walked in silence, then Xander spoke. 'Well. Pretty impressive, aren't they? Or at least, the act they put on. What d'you think?'

They murmured, noncommittal, and silence fell again. Albus checked his watch, and saw it was nearly one in the morning. The fire had burned low, to glowing embers, and the lake was high, slapping soothingly against the window. Albus was almost asleep, when his hand brushed over another flat card, poked under his pillow.

Suddenly awake, he sat up, grasping his wand off the bedside table and lighting it, bending over the card to read it.

\_Task One: We shall start easy, and go harder. For this one, you must simply steal. \_

\_From the study of our illustrious Headmaster Caesar, you must bring us something you can barter. Place your offering in the hands of our own Salazar, and we shall judge how worthy you are. \_

He sat back, leaning against the headboard and staring at the dark wall opposite. So he had to steal something from the Headmaster's office. Well, that couldn't be impossible. He just had to find out the password, and then wait until Caesar left for dinner, and sneak in. Sliding back down under the blankets, he lay for a while in the darkness, a plan forming in his head.

End  
file.